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THE MILITIA.

A LECTURE

BY

WILLIAM HAGGARD Esq.

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THE MILITIA:

ITS IMPORTANCE AS A CONSTITUTIONAL FORCE.

LONDON:
Printed by SPOTTISWOODE & Co.
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Thomas Haggard Esq.r Bark.
From his affectionate Nephew. The
Writer - a Memento of Bradenham
W. H. August 12. 185[illegible]

THE MILITIA:

ITS IMPORTANCE AS A CONSTITUTIONAL FORCE.

A Lecture

DELIVERED IN

THE CAMP AT COLCHESTER, MAY 1856,

AND SUBSEQUENTLY AT THE

UNITED SERVICE INSTITUTION, WHITEHALL,

AND PRINTED AT THE REQUEST OF THE COUNCIL OF THAT SOCIETY.

BY

WILLIAM HAGGARD, ESQ.

OF BRADENHAM, IN THE COUNTY OF NORFOLK;

CAPTAIN IN THE EAST NORFOLK REGIMENT OF MILITIA.

". . . . . idem
Pacis eras, mediusque Belli."
HOR. lib. 2. Ode 19.

LONDON:

LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, LONGMANS, & ROBERTS

1857.

LG

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H3

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

THOMAS WILLIAM EARL OF LEICESTER,

AS LORD-LIEUTENANT OF THE COUNTY, THE CONSTITUTIONAL HEAD OF THE NORFOLK MILITIA,

(TO WHOM THE WRITER, ONE OF HIS LORDSHIP'S DEPUTY-LIEUTENANTS, TAKES THIS OPPORTUNITY OF EXPRESSING HIS SENSE OF MANY PERSONAL KINDNESSES),

AND TO

WILLIAM MASON, OF NECTON, ESQUIRE,

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL COMMANDANT OF THE EAST NORFOLK REGIMENT OF MILITIA,

HIS VALUED NEIGHBOUR AND FRIEND,

THIS HUMBLE ENDEAVOUR

TO MAKE THE SERVICE IN WHICH BOTH ARE SO DEEPLY INTERESTED
BETTER UNDERSTOOD BY THE MILITIA SOLDIER,
AND THE CLASS OF LIFE FROM WHICH HE SPRINGS,
AS WELL AS BY THOSE WHO, BEING THE GREAT EMPLOYERS OF LABOUR IN AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS,
HAVE SO MUCH INFLUENCE IN FACILITATING THE ENLISTMENT OF THE ENGLISH RUSTIC,

This Lecture is Addressed,

BY THEIR FAITHFUL SERVANT,

WILLIAM M. R. HAGGARD.

BRADENHAM:
February 3, 1857.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS Lecture, as the title states, was addressed to the soldiers of the militia regiments in camp at Colchester in the spring of 1856, with the approval of Major-General Gascoigne, in command of the camp, and with a view of making the men somewhat acquainted with the nature of the force in which they served: — it was repeated at the United Service Institution shortly afterwards, at the request of the Council of that Society, who afterwards did the writer the honour to ask him to print it, but which he has deferred doing till the time of annual training approaches. The closing remarks were, of course, addressed only to the latter audience. Though open to criticism, the writer has thought it better that the language in which the Lecture was originally delivered — more intelligible to his Colchester audience than a classical style would have been — should be retained.

The Appendix, and his remarks arising out of General Wyndham's letter, may, of course, be separated from the

original address, should any militia colonel think it worth while to circulate it among the men of his regiment.

The writer has only to add, that he thinks it very probable both his conclusions drawn from history may be questioned, and his opinions as to the formation and organisation of the Militia may be considered erroneous. He can only say, that the first induced him, in his own person, as an English freeholder, to carry out the sentiments he holds; and the latter are the result of the experience he thus acquired as a militia officer.

W. H.

THE MILITIA:

A LECTURE.

SOME of you Soldiers, who have had a little schooling in your parishes at home, or since you have been in the service, may have a slight acquaintance with something of the general history of England. You have read, probably, of the great battles that have been fought, and of the great changes that have taken place in the government of the country; but what I want now to draw your attention to is, how, during all that period of history, and throughout all those great encounters, a domestic military force has ever been an essential element of our British Constitution, — in plainer words, how that the first law of nature, self-defence, the law that protects a man's home and his fireside (and a man's home, you know, is his castle), has not been left to the wild and dangerous direction of his own will alone, but that a domestic and national bond of union has existed on English soil from the earliest times, as well to protect our houses from murder and rapine as our country from danger and invasion.

The increase of population and of wealth, the various rights we possess, and the duties we owe, have in these

more modern days made it necessary, for the *first* of these duties, to employ a permanently enrolled and paid body of men; and that force we call, you know, the "Police."

But the higher and greater duty which we owe to our country, *that* we do not depute to others, *that* we undertake ourselves; and the united and willing band which performs it, we call the "Militia."

It will be my care now to explain how ancient, as well as honourable, is this service, in which you who hear me are engaged; how often you have come to the rescue of your country in its hour of need, and how nobly on such occasions you have done your duty!

It was the Saxon monarch Alfred ("the Great," as he was truly called) who first organised the Militia, and made it of use for purposes of disciplined offence and defence.

That great king lived about one thousand years ago, nearly contemporaneous (or living at the same time) with Charlemagne, the greatest monarch that France can boast.

These two great men, surrounded as they both were with difficulties which to common characters would have been overpowering, yet surmounted them all, and left to their descendants an improved system of government, and those free institutions which, with us at least, have lasted to the present hour, — and which it is, you know, our duty, as Englishmen, to support, preserve, and hand down to our descendants.

Alfred's wisdom and sagacity told him that the men who have *something to lose* are the men *to select to defend;* he therefore arranged his home army, or Militia, that every man *possessing property* should have his of military duty, bringing with him, no doubt,

a certain number of tried and faithful followers to support him. The unhappy incursions of the Danes obliged him always to have an army in readiness;— to provide for this, and, at the same time, to avoid unnecessary hardship, he arranged that when one man's turn of duty was performed, he should retire to his home, and another take his place: thus the necessary occupations of cultivating the ground and of trade were not neglected, while the country remained in a firm state of defence. Alfred had the best of reasons for this; — he could not forget that he was himself the descendant of a line of warriors who had seized the soil of Britain from those who, for want of the courage to protect themselves, and an armed force such as this, had become dispossessed of their inheritance.

I allude to the enfeebled state in which the Britons were left after the departure of their Roman conquerors and protectors, who, on the Roman Empire crumbling away, were obliged to return home and abandon their distant colonies. We know that thus deserted, and harassed by the Picts and Scots, from whom they were unable, from the decline of the military spirit amongst them, to protect themselves, the Britons applied for assistance to the Saxons, who (heathen barbarians as they were,) turned against those they had engaged to assist, (a lesson to nations who forget themselves to be their own defenders!) and after putting the enfeebled and cowardly inhabitants of Britain to the sword, and committing all sorts of atrocities, by degrees possessed themselves of the whole of the island. They, however, were not allowed to retain their spoils in quiet. Other northern warriors, the sea-kings of Denmark, a race of men remarkable for personal strength and gigantic stature, as well as for their hardy and daring spirit,

after a short space of time attacked on all sides the now peaceful and civilised Saxons.

When, therefore, the great Alfred ascended his throne, he found it stripped of all its power, — his subjects dispirited, — his country a wilderness of misery, — his nobles scattered here and there, unable to show a front against the successful Danes. A weak monarch might have submitted, and, as was the fashion of those times, retired to a convent or to Rome, to weep and pray for other and better days. *But Alfred knew* HIS *duty was to* MEET *the occasion.* For a short time he retired, indeed, to a secluded spot on the Isle of Ely, — but his was no cowardly or inglorious seclusion. There he collected together a few of his chief nobility, who, only wanting a leader, were able soon to bring their retainers to his assistance; his talents and energy were an example to his friends, his arms were successful, and the invaders were for the time effectually overcome.

Then, though, did his task *really* commence; and what was his first great work? History told him how his ancestors had acquired Britain, because the Britons were weak and unprepared; later experience had shown how the Danish sea-kings had well nigh despoiled them of their conquest, because the Saxon freeman, though manly and brave, had been content to till his farm, or idly pass away his days in the sports of the field. Alfred's first duty, therefore, was to organise a system of *internal defence;* he united so many families of householders into bonds of union, for defence and offence, — he united families into parishes, parishes into hundreds, hundreds into counties, — each was responsible for the other.

He was a great law-maker,—but he knew that law was of no use unless there were those ready who could *support* the law; — and who so well support it as those

who themselves were to benefit by its protection? He therefore laboured to instil into his subjects a spirit of determined *self-reliance*, and herein he was seconded by the temper of the Saxon people. Internal discord had depressed them for a time, but the Saxon freeman had engrafted on the soil he had conquered the free institutions and free forms of government that he had brought from his fatherland; he acknowledged a loyal obedience to the authority established by such rude law as existed in his tribe, but that *co-existed* with a love and enjoyment of personal freedom; *independent* in his own person, but, *dependent* as one of a community, the general tone of feeling and system of government was one that easily adapted the Saxon landowners to an arranged plan of organised Self-Reliance and Self-Defence. All they wanted was a leader to direct and arrange, — and this they met with in Alfred.

This great king, whose far-seeing statesmanship stands, I think, beyond that of almost any man of any age, knew the temper of his people; he knew how great were the elements of power in his Saxon thane and his Saxon statesman (as the small landowner was then called, and, indeed, as he is now termed throughout East Anglia and the North of England); he wielded these elements well. As wise and prudent in prosperity as he was undaunted in adversity, he filled the throne of his ancestors — *a king in fact as well as in name.*

The period of tranquillity that ensued upon his triumph over the Danes, he employed in establishing civil and military institutions, "in composing the minds of men to industry and justice" (as Hume the historian says), and especially in providing against a return of former calamities, by that arrangement of a system of national defence to which I have already adverted.

This, then, was the origin of our Militia.

not, I ask, a wise arrangement on the part of a monarch? and did not his brave and generous subjects well second their noble prince? What result could there be to such a course but the uninterrupted success that followed? And when I show you, as I shall presently, *how*, with the same courage in the nation, a neglect and discontinuance of these wise precautions produced a *fearful disaster*, and when I also remind you, that in comparatively late years, the same spirit continuing to animate our Saxon blood (which, like a clear and noble stream, undebased by the occasional mixture of elements less pure and crystal, still flows on in grandeur to the ocean; ay, and invigorates with its mighty current the increasing millions of far distant continents!),—when, I say, I remind you, that these precautions, under the blessing of a good Providence, saved this nation, even in the present century, from the terrors of an *invasion*,—you must then understand the use and importance of a force that stands in the vanguard to protect our homes from the recurrence of a similar danger. When the wandering Englishman visits the lofty column that stands on the heights above the Harbour of Boulogne, erected on the site where the first Napoleon made it his frequent practice to trace in the distant horizon the white cliffs of Albion, which he soon thought to invade with the veteran soldiers who had won for him the iron crown of Italy, he remembers with pride how vain was that ambition, and how useless those efforts against a nation which had armed and disciplined its *whole male effective population* for its own defence. Such were my reflections, when on that same spot, a few months since, I drew my boy's attention to that very period of our history.

I have said a "great disaster" befel this country, owing to a neglect of Alfred's sagacious regulations. It *was*

so;—and the disaster was great indeed, not only in its immediate effects, but its ulterior results. In the reign of Ethelred, rightly termed the "Unready," the Danes—who had been before so successfully combated when in superior numbers and strength, but who, since the days of Athelstan (a successor of Alfred's), had allowed the kingdom to have rest—again commenced their desolating ravages. And how were they on this occasion met? Was it with the steady will and determined arm that had animated the great Saxon leader? Were the Militia bands called out, as Alfred had called them, to fight at their monarch's side? No!—instead of this firm and patriotic conduct, alone worthy of a great and free people, a *bribe* of 10,000 pounds of silver, raised from the community by means of a tax called "Dane-geld," was subsituted. What was the consequence of this cowardly expedient? As might have been expected, the rapacious Danes, satisfied for a time, retired,—but only to return with greater force, and with appetites more excited for plunder. Again and again was the unworthy system of *buying them off* adopted, and each time at a higher rate; and finally, a formidable army, called from its leader "Thurkill's Host," ravaged great part of this unhappy island, committed the most fearful atrocities, and only retired in consideration of a bribe of 48,000 pounds of silver, to return *the following year*, when, driving the miserable king from his throne, they made themselves undisputed masters of all England. And this event was the precursor of one still more important and lasting in its effects, and which finally put an end to the Saxon rule in this island, then only for a time suspended by the reigns of the Danish kings Canute and Hardicanute.

Ethelred, in his distress, repaired with his wife and family to the court of Normandy in France, where he

was kindly received, and an intimate friendship was formed between the exiled monarch and his Norman entertainer. This friendship led, in after days, when the Saxon line was restored in the person of Edward the Confessor, to that king's bequeathing his kingdom to the famous William of Normandy, — who, on these grounds, aided, no doubt, by a certain amount of exhaustion produced by the desolating wars to which England had been exposed, — invaded the island, and successfully accomplished, *in spite of* a valiant resistance, that great historical event known as — the *Norman Conquest.*

The Militia, instituted as it was by Alfred, became, after the Conquest, merged or sunk in the general duty of military obedience to some particular chief, who again held his estate on the condition of military service, and who retained some central spot where he fixed his castle. To illustrate this in a familiar way: William the Conqueror granted a great part of the county of Norfolk to one of his principal supporters, Earl de Warrenne, who fixed his residence at a place Norfolk men well know, and where there is the fine old ruin of his castle (from that called "Castle-acre"), now the property of our Lord Lieutenant (the great lawyer, Sir Edward Coke, having become its owner in the reign of Queen Elizabeth). The Earl portioned off his estate to his various retainers, the knights, — who were at *his* call as *he* was at the king's, — and they had *their* castles or strong towers within reach of him. In my own grounds, at Bradenham, a few miles from Castle-acre, is the moat that surrounded the stronghold of the brave De Caleys, retainers of the Earl; and sometimes it is not unpleasing to picture to the mind's eye, when strolling along the ancient road that leads from one point to the other, the knightly cavalcade, that at appointed periods of festivity, or on the sudden exigencies of war, tramped along those same

wooded and retired glades,—joyous with the thought of Whitsun or Christmas frolics, or silent in the expectation of coming bloodshed. You can understand how this "feudal system" (as it was called) was an institution admirably calculated to retain a conquered country in subjection, when the monarch in his own person preserved a powerful authority over, and was feared by, his followers. But, with a feeble monarch on the throne, it was destructive to his own safety, and with a virtuous one, a power opposed to all good government. The feudal lord was often a rebel to his king, and a tyrant on his own estate; his proud Norman heart was unwilling to submit to anything but the dictates of his own will. The descendant of this same Earl de Warrenne, when questioned, in a subsequent reign, as to his right to the lands he possessed, drew from its scabbard a rusty old sword, which he produced as his title, saying, "With this sword my ancestor gained his lands, and, by God's help, with this sword will I keep them."* King Henry II., therefore, who was a wise and

* Hume has paraphrased this speech thus: — "William the Bastard did not conquer the kingdom himself, but the barons, his companions, and my ancestor among the rest, were joint companions in the enterprise;" and that, perhaps, suits best the tenor of my argument. But an erudite friend has pointed out to me in Rapin (fol. ed. vol. i. page 331.), this speech of the proud earl, and the language carries such truthfulness with it, that I have substituted it for that of the more popular historian. It occurred A.D. 1280, on the passing of the statute "*quo warranto*," when Edward I. called on every one to show the title by which he held his lands. The king flattered himself that with many the original writings would have been lost, and the land would have been forfeited to himself; but he was frustrated by this bold conduct of the Earl de Warrenne in his answer to the king's judges; it put a stop to the inquiry generally, which, by the way, is another proof how constitutional government began to have its weight over Norman regal oppression, even in the person of a descendant of a great Norman chieftain.

sagacious monarch, finding himself strong enough to do so, was determined to curb such unruly spirits, and by opposing the power of his great nobles, thereby to secure his own. Hearing that the judges whom he appointed to go the circuits, were interrupted by the barons in the execution of justice, he resolved on demolishing their castles, and would allow no strong place to remain in hands he could not safely trust. To do this, he was compelled, in self-defence, to issue orders to the smaller proprietors of land to arm themselves for his service to the best of their ability,— a step no less efficient to repress the insolence of the barons, than to consolidate, fix on a firm basis, and extend, the liberties of the people. Henry thus opened the gates of hope to the conquered and oppressed Saxon, who readily lent his aid to control the ambition of the proud Norman baron, whose castle walls,

> "Broad, massive, high, and stretching far,
> And held impregnable in war,"

were yet not able to extinguish the manly spirit of *that Saxon yeoman* who lived within the sound of its horn. How well is he portrayed by Chaucer, the poet of the middle ages, — the father, I may call him, of English poetry. He describes him to you as

> "Clad in coate and bodè of greene,
> A sheath of peacocke arowes bright and shene
> Under his belte he bare full thriftily,
> Well could he dress his tackle yeomanly;
> His arrowes droupèd not, with fethers lowe,
> And in his hand he bare a *mightè bowe.*
> * * * *
> Upon his arm he bare a gaie bracère,
> And by his side, a sword and a bokeler,
> And on the other side a gaie daggère,
> Harnessed well, and sharp as poinct of spere."

In the Saxon yeoman, as thus described by the poet, we recognise a true picture of the bold Robin Hood, who, with his friend and companion, Little John, and his jolly band of foresters, lived about this period "under the greenwood tree,"— and of whom so many adventures are told, with which we have all been familiar from our childhood. Robber though he really was, his free and daring spirit, and his skill as an English archer, have always made him a favourite character in our legendary history. And here I may mention, that through all England at this time, there were regulations most strict for the teaching and practice of the bowman's noble art; in country churchyards, the ancient yew-trees we see and admire, date from this distant period, — planted, cherished, and protected, that the English yeoman might always possess that instrument of war, his "*mightè bowe.*" "Well," indeed, as Chaucer says, "could he dress his tackle yeomanly," as was afterwards proved at Cressy, Agincourt, and many a hard-won field, gained by the skill and prowess of the British archer.

But to return to our subject. Henry II., lest the kingdom should be exposed by this demolition of strong places and castles, lately built by the Norman nobles, fixed (and here we see the first *practical* return to the earlier system of domestic defence established by Alfred) what was called an "assize of arms," by which all his subjects were compelled to put themselves in a situation proper for defending themselves and the realm. Every one possessed of a knight's fee, — that is, about five hundred acres of land, —was ordered to keep for each fee a coat of mail or armour, a shield, and a lance; every freeman possessing goods of a certain value (sixteen marks) had to supply the same. Every one possessed of ten marks (about £6 of our money; but in reality, from the relative value of things, a great

more), was obliged to have an iron gorget, a cap of iron, a lance, and a wambais (that is, a coat quilted with wool or tow). These arms could not be sold, or pawned, or in any way taken as forfeiture, gift, or security. When the possessor died, they descended to his heir, and if the heir was a minor, the guardian had custody of his arms till he was of age, and, until that period, found a substitute to use them in the king's service. The itinerant justices were empowered to swear persons to be faithful to the king, and keep these arms for the defence of the country. No man was to hold *more* arms than he carried to this assize. These careful regulations, I think, show that the constitutional theory was, that a man's property carried with it the duty of assisting in the defence of the country. All these arrangements, exhibiting as they did a well-ordered system of preparation for defence against disorder *within* the realm, and danger *without*, helped to produce something like a settled government in England,—the good effect of which was shown in the reign of Henry's successor, John, — when the barons, *uniting with* the Saxon freeholders, wrested from that weak and wretched prince the *Great Charter*, which has ever since been considered the key-stone of the liberties of Englishmen.

The twenty-five barons who obtained it, would never have been so moderate in their demands for *exclusive* privileges, would never have cared to secure to the PEOPLE of England the laws of their old Saxon kings, had it not been for the great influence the mass of the English people had obtained; their ancient vigour was resuscitated. How so? Because the use of arms had given them a knowledge of the power they possessed to make a stand for the security of their rights.

But soon, however, was a great change to take place in the system of warfare, and the science of archery fell,

in a great measure, into disuse, owing to the employment of gunpowder.

The generally received opinion as to the mode of its discovery is this. A monk in a monastery at Fribourg in Switzerland, happened, for some purpose of amusement or science, to have made a mixture of saltpetre, sulphur, and charcoal, which, being covered with a stone, accidentally took fire and blew up. This accident led to inquiry as to the nature of the composition.

I am somewhat inclined to believe that the properties of this powerful agent of destruction had long been known to a few learned persons here and there, but at that period there was but little opportunity to disperse knowledge. However, it was at *this* time that its use became general, and the people who first employed it to any extent were the Italians. Its importance was hardly, however, understood for a time, for the guns that were used were so clumsy and so difficult to be transported from place to place, that their usefulness was not appreciated,—and even now, every day, improvements are, as you know, being made, which increase its efficiency as a mighty engine of war. Indeed, on the whole, though a fearfully destructive agent, its discovery may be considered a *blessing* to mankind. Nations have been brought more to a level, conquests are more rapid, and success and consequent cessation of arms are reduced to a matter of calculation and comparative certainty. To resume: as the feudal power in the course of time began to decline, and the tie that existed between the lord and his retainer to become as weak as the faith of the lord himself to the king was treacherous, the king found it necessary that he should have other means at hand to secure a military force for his service.

"Commissions of array" were issued from time, and officers of experience were sent int

district to set all the inhabitants in military order. In these commissions it was enacted, that no man should be compelled to quit the kingdom at any rate, or his own shire even, except on urgent business. And here you see a nearer advance to the organization of our *modern* system of Militia, to which a still closer step was made in the reign of Henry VIII., when "lieutenants of counties" began to be introduced, as standing representatives of the Crown, and to keep their several counties in a state of military preparation. Their commissions contained in substance the same powers as the more ancient "commissions of array," which, thereupon, fell into disuse. I am not disposed to think, though, that there were trainings either frequent or well arranged; or, at all events, there was not that well-concerted system that there had been in earlier times for arming the people. Still, the sad trouble to which England had been subjected in the civil wars of the Houses of York and Lancaster, as well as the remains of the feudal system (the fabric of which had not entirely fallen to pieces), must have made the mass of the population more or less familiar with arms, and acquainted with warlike exercises.

For we find at the time of the famous "Spanish Armada," that Queen Elizabeth was able at once to collect together a Militia of *forty thousand men*, somewhat trained to the use of arms. Although this was no great force to oppose to a hostile armament of *fifty thousand disciplined veterans*, — Spanish and Italian soldiers of fortune,— who had all their lives been engaged in the different contests of Europe, yet, headed as they were by their queen, it was no mean nor contemptible army; and it shows there must have been some *continued* system of military preparation, even to have had such a force ready at a few days' notice.

The fleet in which this vast armament was housed, it is said, extended seven miles from one extremity to the other. There are few things in existence that strike the mind with so much wonder, admiration, and awe, as a noble fleet riding at anchor. Such, some of us have witnessed lately, at the naval review at Portsmouth,— and few will easily forget the emotions the magnificent spectacle excited within them. If, then, such sights as these, gazed on in peace and security, so enthusiastically influence the feelings of a country, what must the effect have been, when this mighty and *hostile* armament was within reach of the shores of England! The nation prepared itself for a stupendous though hasty conflict; the queen herself mounted, as we know, her milk-white charger, and at Tilbury Fort rode through the lines, and, encouraging her soldiers, told them that "if the Spaniards landed, the fate of England rested on a *single battle*, and, *though a woman*, she herself would lead them to the field, and would rather perish in battle than survive the ruin of her people."

The soldiers, inexperienced as they were, though animated with the true spirit of Englishmen, asked one another, says the historian, "whether it were possible that Englishmen could display less courage than their queen exhibited, — or, however pressed, could abandon such a sacred cause?" England, however, was spared the bloody conflict, for the Armada never effected its landing; the large, unwieldy vessels, already dispersed by a storm, were harassed by our cruisers, and were never able to unite together again for purposes of injury to England. In our own day the case would be far different; steam could easily convey from the opposite coast its myriads of soldiers: what security, then, have we, if we are not well prepared for such an emergency, not only with a fleet ready to meet our enemy at sea,

but with a large and well-disciplined army of defence to oppose his landing?

To pursue my subject: it was James I., Elizabeth's successor, who established the *trained bands*. They numbered 160,000 men. I imagine their state of discipline must have been somewhat inferior; still, however, that monarch had such confidence in them, that he did not possess a single guard; indeed, the city of London prided itself extremely on its bands, which even then drilled in what is still called the "Artillery Garden" in the city.

Charles I. having, in the commencement of the troubles of the civil wars, exerted some military powers, such as his ancestors had always considered to be their inherent right, but which the discontented denied him the authority to assume, the question began to be discussed, "How far the power over the Militia *did inherently reside in the Crown?*" That power being, as the great lawyer Blackstone says, "unsupported by any statute, and founded only on immemorial usage."

This question, deeply agitated as it was, became one of the immediate causes of the rupture between the king and his parliament; the two Houses of Lords and Commons not only denying the prerogative of the Crown to take into its own hands the sole authority and power to call out the Militia, but illegally usurping that authority themselves.

The use the Parliament made of their power was soon exhibited at the Battle of Newbury *, when the trained

* In the library of the United Service Institution, I was shown a curious manuscript, with the banners of the different captains of the trained bands at the Battle of Newbury, fully emblazoned therein; one is called "Captain and Merchant Tailor," another, "Captain and Cheesemonger," &c., &c. There is also in the Museum one of those

bands of militia of London — though raw recruits, and hastily collected together — made a most determined stand against the King's cavalry, and, by their steady and resolute conduct, turned the day in favour of the Parliamentary forces. Ill-directed valour! Thankful ought we to be to a kind Providence, which has not cast our lot in times like those. If difficulties and troubles and reverses come upon us now, the nation grieves as one man, and unites, as of late, in one indignant outcry, at the errors of those whose ill appreciation of their duty may have caused the disaster: if victory rewards the bravery of our soldiers, a united nation greets them with its thanks; and whatever may be the differences that divide men in opinion elsewhere, the soldier knows that an undivided feeling of gratitude is the sure and best acknowledgment that his country offers him on his return from its service!

Men must form their own opinions on the period of history to which I have been now referring: what the Crown may have claimed beyond its legal rights; what the Parliament may have properly resisted; "how far men may have been true patriots, who were certainly disloyal subjects:"—we must judge according to our own impressions of duty on such points;— but happy, as I said before, must we all be, that, living under a now settled and well constituted system of government, whatever may be the dangers that threaten us from without, we have reasonable ground to hope that, in our time and in that of our children, the dangers and horrors of civil war may be spared us!

And if there be any place where reflections like these may be justly made, it is here, in the ancient and loyal

"mightè bowes" that the English archers used, which was fished up somewhere from a vessel that had been for centuries at the bottom of the sea! It quite answers to the term Chaucer gives it.

town of Colchester, noted in the history of that time for the gallant defence of its town and castle against the army of Fairfax, that so long besieged it.* On the fields just beyond the lines of this camp were some of his cannon planted: and the tower of St. Mary's church, which, since rebuilt, was destroyed by them, tells you the direction his fire took. Noble, indeed, was the defence of the old castle. I wish I could add, as manly the conduct of Fairfax, when its brave defenders were obliged to surrender. Some here may know St. Giles' church, just at the bottom of the hill outside the camp. In the aisle you may see a plain slab, which bears this simple inscription: "Under this marble lye the bodies of two most valient captains, Sir Charles Lucas and Sir George Lisle, knights, who for their eminent loyalty to their Soverain, were, on the 28th day of August, 1648, by the command of Sir Thomas Fairfax, then General of the Parliament army, in cold blood barbarously murdered."

These were two of the brave cavaliers, or officers of the King's army, who defended their town of Colchester, — and that is how the Parliamentary army, when they surrendered with the honours of war, treated their prisoners! Most touching is the whole account, in the history of the time, of the hasty and cruel execution of those brave men.

At the death of the usurper Cromwell, Charles II. was recalled to the throne of his father.

One of the first acts of Charles' reign was to sweep away all ancient feudal privileges, and also, in a special Act of Parliament, to recognise and establish, beyond doubt, the sole right of *the Crown* to govern and command the Militia. In 13 Charles II. chap. vi. (1660) is built the constitution of the Militia *as it now exists.*

* Vide Morant's Hist. of Essex.

The words of the Act are very pointed and stringent: "Forasmuch as within all his Majesty's Realm and Dominions, the sole supreme government and command of the Militia and of all forces by sea and land, and of all forts and places of strength, is, and by the laws of England ever was, the undoubted right of his Majesty, and his Royal predecessors, kings and queens of England, and that both or either of the Houses of Parliament cannot nor ought not to pretend to the same, nor can nor may lawfully raise or levy any war, offensive or defensive, against his Majesty, his heirs or lawful successors; and yet the contrary thereof hath of late years been practised, almost to the ruin and destruction of this kingdom," &c. &c.

There were, however, connected with these first Acts for the raising of the Militia, regulations found to be very expensive. The men had to find their own arms and use their own powder; and, as a natural consequence, the training of the Militia fell into disuse. Security produced neglect; but there was also an additional reason for its discontinuance, in the formation, for the first time, of what proved to be the commencement of a *standing army* in the reign of this monarch.

When Charles II., after his restoration, reviewed the veteran troops that had served under Cromwell, he was, the history of that period says, "much struck with their beauty, order, discipline, and martial appearance," and wishing to retain them in his service, it was with difficulty his wise chancellor, Clarendon, could persuade him of the dangerous spirit by which these troops were animated. Charles, however, retained, as guards of his own person, about 1000 horse, and 4000 infantry as regular soldiers, and this formed the commencement of the standing army which has ever since been kept up in England. At the end of his reign, that force had

increased to 8000 men, and when, in 1688, our liberties were finally settled, when the Prince of Orange, afterwards William III., was invited over to England, and James II., whose daughter Mary he had married, was, for his unconstitutional conduct, deposed (or rather, abdicated the throne) this standing army had gradually increased to 30,000 men.

Smith, in his "Wealth of Nations," makes this the distinction between the soldier and the militia-man:—"The maintenance and pay which the State affords the first is the *principal ordinary* fund of his subsistence, the performance of military duties his *sole occupation:* the performance of military duties is the *occasional* occupation of the militia soldier, and the principal and ordinary fund of his subsistence is derived from *other sources.*" Ancient experience and modern necessity make us look to the *Militia* for our *home defences;* to the *standing army* to meet in the field the standing armies of other countries. To keep up the balance of power in Europe, a highly equipped and disciplined army is no doubt essential to every nation of the first class. Though our insular position in great measure saves us from the same danger as continental nations are constantly exposed to, yet our extensive colonies and foreign garrisons constantly require the presence of regular troops.

The regular army and the Militia are thus equally essential to the safety of the country, but they are quite distinct: however, as it is not necessary here to enlarge on this point, I will briefly sum up the history of the Militia.

The establishment and maintenance of the standing army having, from the reign of Charles II., been, in point of fact, substituted for the Militia, it was only, we read, in the year 1756, just a century ago, that "the dread of invasion" caused serious attention to be

bestowed upon the restoration to efficiency of this important branch of the public service. It was improved by degrees during the reigns of George II. and III. Under the first of these princes, the Militia force was fixed at 37,748 men: it has since been considerably increased. The duration of the period of service of a militia-man, which was first fixed for three years, was increased to five by the Act of 26 George III. Formerly also the Militia of Great Britain and Ireland could not, under any pretext, be sent out of their respective kingdom; but at the close of the last century an Act of Parliament suspended a restriction so hurtful to the defence of both countries, in favour of such of the English Militia as should volunteer to pass over into Ireland: and finally, in 1811, this sort of barrier, which so limited the services and usefulness of the Militia, was abolished for ever. It is evident that these different measures have had for their object a more military organisation for the Militia, as better adapting it for its true end—the defence of all parts of the empire.

In 1802, being the year that the country was threatened with invasion by Napoleon, it was thought expedient that the numbers to be raised and kept in constant readiness for service should be augmented; and an Act for that purpose was passed (42 Geo. III. chap. 90.), all other statutes being repealed. That Act, which has since been amended, was perpetual, and "provided for the whole machinery of a Militia on an active footing, arranging for the ballot in case of necessity, and for annual training and exercise:" and though during the long peace which preceded our late war with Russia, these trainings have been unwisely discontinued, with the idea of their involving unnecessary expense to the State, the whole machinery of the Militia has been maintained, and the commissions of the officers have

been in full force; so that, for this long interval, skeleton Militia regiments have existed, only requiring filling up to their full proportions by the rank and file which, in the last year or two, have been so well supplied. A late Act enacts that the Queen may, under advice of her Privy Council, raise and keep up in England a number not exceeding 80,000 militia-men, in Scotland 10,000, and in Ireland 30,000; total number for the British Isles, 120,000 — no inconsiderable army to be organised for home defence!

But though we have thus so formidable a force for the protection of our shores, let me draw your attention to the fact, that we have never lost sight of its original plan and scope, as designed by its great framer Alfred. Indeed, we have jealously scrutinised every step that has been taken, in alarm lest its distinctive *domestic* character should be lost sight of in the gradual process of development and advance to a higher state of usefulness and efficiency. Thus the Militia were *at first*, as I mentioned, only bound to serve for *three years*, instead of five, as now; they were, at first, not obliged to march even out of their own county; and even now they cannot be *compelled* to march out of the United Kingdom, — though, in the late war, regiments strongly imbued with patriotic feeling were encouraged to *volunteer* to garrison the strongholds of our colonies and foreign dependencies, and thus relieve the Queen's troops when called upon to march to the seat of war. The Militia of the United Kingdom can also only be called out for *permanent service* "in cases of actual invasion, or imminent danger thereof, or of rebellion, or insurrection, or whenever a state of war," such as we have lately passed through, "exists" between her Majesty and any foreign Power. Indeed, I may remind you, that so fully have these views been kept in sight, and so

scrupulous has been the policy of Government on this head, that when it was thought the moment had arrived for permanently embodying the Militia, war having been declared between England and Russia, those soldiers who had enlisted into its ranks with the idea of only having limited trainings, were suffered to depart if they chose, — now that the state of things was altered, and return to their homes; and many, as you know, did so. *I* consider this to have been an exaggerated view of the case; for a man who enlists for a soldier, whether in the Militia or the regular army, must take the chance of war; and of what use are the trainings of the Militia, if not to prepare the men, when the exigences of the State require it, for prolonged service? Besides, the measure was attended with enormous expense and loss to Government at a most critical moment, and melancholy it was to witness the disruption of regiments composed of so fine a body of men, who had already acquired considerable knowledge of their duty. But, whether wise or not, it shows we still retain the original predominant feeling of adherence to the Saxon spirit of those principles and institutions established by Alfred. It is because the institutions of old England *are* old Saxon institutions, and (allowing for the difference of manners and the necessary influence of a more advanced stage of civilisation) because the course of our actions is influenced now, as then, by the same train of thought, and the same habits of solid (though it may be homely) care for domestic and private safety and comfort, that as a nation we dwell on and cherish the recollection of this remote period of history. *It is the golden ore from which we obtained our riches, i. e.* our freedom. The English character is now very much what it was then. We have seen how its stubborn determination withstood and lived superior to the overwhelming flood of despotic

tyranny imposed on it in a succeeding age, under the Norman sway; we have learned how a spark of returning freedom, once lighted, burnt with a steady flame, till the English spirit of vigorous thought, of resolute action, of painstaking and successful industry, as well as daring and determined valour, rejoiced in the restoration of its ancient Saxon privileges, with a gradual return to constitutional principles of liberty. What was the prize for which our Saxon ancestors fought? The restoration of those rights by which alone they could be *free.* Was their task an easy one? *No;* it required a giant's strength: nay, more than this — it could only be accomplished by *union,* — the union (of which I have already spoken) of man with man, family with family, parish with parish; by intrusting the power of the sword to the hands of freemen, united to protect themselves, united too, as neighbours in social links at home, as well as companions in arms in their country's service. The Militia of Alfred, being based upon the peculiar national character of the Saxon, combined all these various elements of strength; therefore, I say it may be characterised as the PERSONIFICATION OR EMBODIMENT OF THE PATRIOTIC SPIRIT OF THIS NATION, exhibiting itself in a willingness on the part of its citizens to devote themselves for a time to military life, while they still preserve their cares and interests in the pursuits and duties of civil life. I conceive it to be the idea of the English constitution, that a man's duties as a militia-man, arise *out* of his duties as a private citizen, or rather that this is only another phasis or cast of his character. I think, too, whatever may be its anomalies where a high state of discipline is expected, that it will be an evil day for this island, when this ancient constitutional force is merged (as some would wish, who do not under-

stand its true composition) in the standing military force of the country. But, however distinct these two institutions in their military organisation and the particular purposes for which each, for the time being, is intended — whether this applies to the brief service of the militia-man, or the life-long devotion of the regular soldier — on one common ground they may both meet. From each, the qualities of valour, steadiness, sobriety, discipline; from each, the love of country, are equally expected: nor is it an unfair boast that, in these points, the militia soldiers have, ere this, rivalled their brethren of the line.

The militia-men may, indeed, feel that they have had their full share in the duty their forefathers have so often performed before them: as they defended their native shores in the hour of need, so the Militia of the present day have done, not only that, but they have helped to recruit the regular army of Great Britain with 30,000 disciplined soldiers, and garrisoned all the important strongholds, not only at home, but elsewhere, enabling thereby the Queen's regular troops to take the field in the emergency to which this country was subjected by the ambitious policy of Russia!

Let them, too, especially remember that, on the hard-fought field of Talavera (Wellington's first great victory over Napoleon), it was the militia recruits from England, to the number of 16,000 men, who fought so well, and whose discipline was so remarkable. So lately arrived were they, that the historian Alison says, "the accoutrements of those who were lying dead on the field still retained the numbers of the militia corps to which they originally belonged." I was told by a friend of mine, an officer now dead (who had at that time just joined the army, with a number of recruits from the East Norfolk Militia), that at Talavera his regiment of 700

men, being under orders not to fire, 500 fell dead before the enemy's guns in the space of twenty minutes without returning a single shot!* If this be true, it shows to what a perfect state of discipline these militia soldiers had attained, before they joined the army of the Peninsula; and if the present war had continued, we have no reason to doubt they would have arrived at an equal degree of efficiency.

I mention these things, because I know to what influences the militia soldier is subjected in our country parishes. I have observed, with sorrow, how great are the efforts, too often successful, made amongst his friends and relations, to prevent his enlisting; and having completed his period of service, I know that it is not thought by those friends that the militia-man has been employing himself *usefully;* indeed, it is because he so little understands his own position, and the importance of that arm of the public service of which he is a member, that I have addressed these remarks to him. But let him remember, that whatever may be the opinion expressed concerning his employment by those incapable of properly judging on the subject, the *Queen* and *Parliament* think very differently. Her Gracious Majesty has expressed *her* approbation, and *they* have voted their thanks to each individual private soldier for the services he has performed!

Militia soldiers! When you were formed into square, and heard those thanks for your services read to you, recollect, it was the recognition of the Country, expressed by the voice of Parliament, of the value of your services.

* As I have never seen this anecdote confirmed in the page of History, I cannot put it into print without somewhat mistrusting my friend's recollection; the "vista" of years has a magnifying effect with all of us!—but the illustration is equally applicable, if the number be less formidable.

I confess, myself, that I think it would have been well if greater solemnity had been attached to this ceremony. A great constitutional principle was involved in it, far different from the routine of reading the sentence of an ordinary court-martial, or any mere regimental business. *Too deep an impression of that event cannot be engrafted in your minds.* It is the best answer you can give to the careless and sometimes disloyal remarks you hear in your villages at home: it is the noblest encouragement you can offer to your companions, to follow your example. Nor ought that expression of the Thanks of the Country to be less welcome to those of us, too, by whom a more responsible position in the service is necessarily held than by yourselves, and to whom an implicit obedience to an unaccustomed discipline and control may not always have been more agreeable than to you. For my own part, I see in it the outward expression of that truth that the history of our country impresses on the minds of those who drink in its spirit, and which I have wished to make you understand in this Address,—namely: that while our voluntary service is a *right* our country can *claim* from us, it is the service of children towards their father, not of servants towards a master. Our rulers have, of late years, by omitting to train the Militia, neglected to arouse and keep alive this ancient feeling of patriotic duty in Englishmen. Happily, it has now been proved the occasion was only wanting to resuscitate it. That there should be fostered, in hall and cottage, for centuries yet to come, as there has existed for centuries past, a spirit that may promote the greatness, while it protects the shores of Old England, should be our prayer; and returning, as we shortly shall do, to our homes, let us, each in our own sphere, do our especial part towards this great end! And let each militia-man who, in his regiment, has learned order, obedience, and

discipline, also remember, that thereby he has acquired habits that may lead him to become a thriving tradesman, an industrious and successful husbandman—in some capacity, a good private citizen; and remembering this, let him exert himself to the uttermost, whatever may be his future sphere of life, therein, with the help of Providence, to do *his Duty!*

APPENDIX.

(AS ADDED TO THE FOREGOING LECTURE, WHEN DELIVERED AT THE UNITED SERVICE INSTITUTION, WHITEHALL.)

I SHOULD, to this professional and educated audience, like to add a few remarks which were not suited to my hearers in the camp. The observations of Mr. Justice Blackstone seem to me a decisive answer to those who, from insufficient acquaintance with the true distinctive character of a *miltia-man* from a *regular soldier*, would amalgamate the two forces in one; or destroy their distinctive difference, by having the less highly disciplined force officered entirely by the regular forces of the Crown. "The general scheme," he says, "of the Militia Laws is, to discipline a certain number of the inhabitants of every county, chosen by lot for three years, and officered by the lord lieutenant, deputy-lieutenants, and other principal landholders, under a commission of the Crown; they are not compellable to march out of their own county (unless by special Act of Parliament), nor in any way compellable to march out of the Kingdom." "This," he adds "is the constitutional security which our laws have provided for the public peace, and for protection of the Realm against foreign and domestic violence, and which the Statutes declare is essentially necessary for the safety and prosperity of the Kingdom."

Again, "the commissions of those who officer it are holden, not because they are necessarily experienced soldiers, but because they are supposed to have a particular interest by property, or, at all events, by ties of near association, in the county to which the corps belongs;" and it is presumed (not we hope quite without justice) that a zealous endeavour to perform those duties that devolve upon us, to our best ability, should in some measure counterpoise our want of experience;

(though, at the same time, it is very wrong not to give us the opportunity of frequent and efficient trainings). From what I have already said, however, it will be seen, that the two forces are essentially distinct in their scope and character.

The soldier who bears on his breast the medals that his gallantry won him at Alma and at Inkermann, feels indeed that it is the appreciation of his countrymen, and the love of his country, that make them truly valuable to him; he would spurn, and justly so, with scorn, the thought that he is not as *true* and *loyal* as he is brave. Why, then, the jealousy of the English constitution with regard to the maintenance of a *standing army*, as contradistinguished from a *militia force?* Why does the army of Great Britain only hold a continued existence from *year* to *year*, by the special sanction of an Act of Parliament, *passed every session?* Why are we so watchful and so jealous? Because evil times *might* come, as they have come before, when the army might be made the instrument of oppression, when the liberties of Englishmen *might* be sacrificed *to the power of the sword.*

I can conceive no other reason than this; an argument, by the bye, that has frequently been illustrated by examples in the nations around us, as well as in the Roman Empire in former days. If therefore it be the theory of our constitution that there really is *no* standing army on English soil, how can that which is the ancient constitutional force of the country, be based *on* that which the exigences of modern times have brought into existence, and which the will of Parliament might, in any one year, bring to a final close? Of course, we know very well it will not be so; my argument only goes to the point that by law *it may;* and *if* it may, it is at once unconstitutional to fix permanently part of that system on the Militia; therefore, taking Blackstone's declaration as the law of the land, I consider any scheme to officer the Militia from the half-pay officers of the line (in their capacity *as officers of the line,* not as *English freeholders*), or any similar scheme, as simply against the law of the land;—and, as was said once before, "nolumus leges Angliæ mutare." But, on the other hand, do I suppose the Militia, as a force, is as useful as it might be? Far from it; in the first place, are the people of England represented in its ranks? They are

not so. And let us here go back to first principles: it is a national defensive force in which *every order of the State* ought to be represented. But the private soldiers are men whose condition of life is, with most of them, *raised* from what it was when they enlisted. What a wide gap in social position is there between the men and those who command them! Yet, how numerous are the intervening classes of life, that have, in the last century or two, sprung up in this great and wealthy country, and who ought, in the theory of its constitution, to be *represented* in the Militia. *They are not so.* This is not an unfounded observation; for, long before I was a militia officer myself, or thought of being one, I had practical proof of its truth. As a deputy-lieutenant, I interested myself much to get recruits, and I knew many who would not enlist as private soldiers, who could not, as the Militia is at present organised, enter in any other way; yet they were most valuable men to have — men of good education, respected by others, and respecting themselves. If they had gone from the Militia to the Line, what a career was open to them! If they had remained, how valuable would their example have been in their own corps! I say, therefore, that if the Militia continues to come up for training from year to year, a modification of its arrangements might be made, to take in a large *class* of men whose services the country does not at present possess. If not allowed to sleep, but both called up yearly, and sent to pass its period of training in a *camp*, where both officers and men would have the advantage of instruction and example from those to whom arms is a *profession* (to say nothing of the pleasures of social intercourse between regiment and regiment); if, too, the recruits were kept at the dépôt for a certain time on their first enlistment, — a captain and two subalterns, perhaps, added to the permanent staff;—by these and similar simple arrangements, I think a military spirit would be engendered in our rural districts, and I believe that, at the end of each training, very many would there be, who never would have thought of it on their first separation from home, who would then willingly enlist into the line; and the regular army would thus be served with a continued stream of well-drilled recruits; men entering the service, not by the deceptive wiles, the immoral incentives, of the recruiting-sergeant, — but willingly,

freely, knowing what they have before them when they enter; the duties they will be called on to perform,—the honourable rewards a proper performance of them will obtain for them!—men entering the service, I say, willingly and freely, because their habits are formed to military duties by what they have learned in the Militia, and they have thereby obtained a taste for military life and exercises. But you never will get a proper class of young men, willingly to enlist, *even* in the Militia, without having recourse to the *ballot*. There is, unfortunately, that prejudice in our country parishes against enlisting, that if a young man feels inclined to do so, all the influences of domestic life are exercised to an extraordinary extent, to prevent him following his bent. Perhaps, if the squire, or the squire's brother, is an officer, a few respectable young men *may* follow; but it is the exception, not the rule. Every deputy-lieutenant knows what sort of men he has had to swear in. If the ballot were in use, you would get the more eligible of this present class, because they would enter as substitutes, and you would be able to supply that want which I have alluded to: a better and superior class would come into the Militia than you now have; for this reason—that many a man who would not think of enlisting, yet when his lot has fallen to him, would follow the chance: he would serve; he would think it beneath him to shirk his duty and purchase a substitute. I believe the men who served in the Militia in former days were a far superior class to those we have had lately, and *for this reason;*—at least, I know men in the country who served formerly, and who are of a very different stamp to the generality of those *we* have had; and on inquiry I have found these have been men chosen by ballot in the first instance. People talk about the glories of *voluntary* enlistment; but the men we have only come for the sake of the bounty money: and what can be more shocking and demoralising, than the way in which that bounty is spent? Who can forget the scenes that took place when Lord Panmure sent word (and the number, by the way, that left the ranks, shows how far they enlisted with a *reasonable and willing mind*) that every militia-man who would re-enlist himself should have a pound by way of gratuity,—scenes to which one was obliged to shut one's eyes, or there would soon have been an end to the

reattesting. And at the same time that you are offering public money to be squandered in this way, a most iniquitous system of "stoppages" is in daily operation: the "just sense of wrong" that this cruel system engenders,—(a system which is a painful surprise to the recruit when he enters on his duties),—makes him readily take the proffered opportunity to turn his back on his regiment; and the evil does not stop here, but alas! his complaints at the village alehouse keep others away who would otherwise have enlisted and joined him. To put honesty out of the question (for there is none where you tell a man he is to receive so much, and he finds he only receives it *minus* a large deduction of which he knew nothing) — it would be a curious though degrading inquiry, What has the country lost by the enormous bounties it has had to give on enlistment? Recruits being all the more difficult to obtain, by the discontent the system of stoppages has produced, what has it gained by those very stoppages?

The object of the foregoing Lecture was, to excite in the militia soldiers a little pride in the service to which they had been engaged. Had there been a greater infusion of a better class, they would naturally have had this honest pride. With the English tone of thought,—and the prejudice which exists against the military life,—which is much increased by the little consideration in which, in matters of this sort, the soldier is held,—you can only get that better class by means of the ballot.

If there is a word of truth, either in the historical facts I have given, or in the reflections arising out of them, the State has a right to claim the service of its subjects,—and that, not the dross, but the ore;—I do not say by conscription, to serve in a standing army; but by lot, to serve in a Militia,—for purposes of home defence.

I expect these opinions will not be concurred in by all that hear me; perhaps by very few. All I say is, they are honest ones, spoken by one who has thought on the subject, and had some, though not very great, experience in it. Grateful indeed should I be to those who invited me here this afternoon, to take a prominent position quite foreign to my habits, if these latter remarks that I have made, could induce any one in authority to consider the subject further. I am convinced that every element

exists in English country life for making the Militia a truly noble force, to which the respected and educated of the trading and agricultural classes would flock. Let it stand on the basis of its constitutional organisation; let *liberal* but *judicious* arrangements be made on the part of Government; let there be frequent and effectual trainings, and the Queen will then ever have at her command a body upon which she can rely, for the safety of her shores, when her regular troops are actively engaged in the field; she can, too, be sure of an uninterrupted supply of trained soldiers, ready to recruit her army from the ranks of her ancient and national force, the Militia.

Other points there are, connected with the organisation of a militia, in which the arrangements of Prussia and other continental states might be considered; but the subject would carry us too far for the patience of our hearers. Matters there are, too, connected with the pay of the officers, particularly subaltern officers, which are not without weight, but which would involve too many details, for me here to enter upon them. I beg to apologise for having already so long detained this audience; and especially I do so, to those experienced and gallant officers who are present, for daring to speak with the freedom I have on matters connected with the profession of arms;—though, on the abstract political question, I feel bound to say what I think. With these remarks, I beg to conclude an Address which, however slight and cursory in its character, as proceeding from one not accustomed to enter deeply into military subjects, may yet have the effect of eliciting consideration from those who have greater experience than myself, and greater opportuuity of impressing their opinions on the notice of their countrymen.

Remarks on a Letter to the Lord-Lieutenant of Norfolk, "On the Army and the Militia," from Major-General Windham, C. B. Published by Murray, Albemarle Street.

THIS letter, which I believe has attracted general attention, certainly in this part of England, starts with an argument so *reasonable*, viz.: (1.) "That the ranks of the Militia should be

the basis from whence the Line ought properly to be recruited;" (2.) "That everything that is liberal and enlightened should be studied by the Government to make the Militia popular;" that when, upon such patriotic principles, a conclusion is arrived at which, it appears to me, is quite unconstitutional, some especial remarks seem necessary as an appendage to the foregoing Lecture, which professes to treat upon the constitutional formation of the Militia—though the question is referred to incidentally in the course of the Lecture itself.

That the "Army should not be looked upon as an 'EXCRESCENCE' that it would be desirable to remove the moment the occasion for its employment is passed," . . . "that it should be put in direct communication with the Militia, should in fact *spring from it*," is, I think, unquestionable. *Where* I venture to differ entirely from the Major-General is, in the way in which he would propose to do this, viz.: "one half of it to be embodied for fourteen or twenty-one days in each year, the other half to be under arms ninety days in each year," and that while the men were receiving a small "sort of retaining fee," it would be on the understanding "that they would be called on to join the regular army in a body, on any sudden emergency, or whenever the Crown might think their services were required."

The Major-General echoes, as a soldier, what Mr. Justice Blackstone gravely asserts as a lawyer. The latter says, "In a land of liberty, it is extremely dangerous to make a distinct order of the profession of arms; in absolute monarchies, this is necessary for the safety of the prince, and arises from the main principle of their constitution—that of governing by fear; but in free States, the profession of a soldier, taken singly and merely as a profession, is justly an object of jealousy: in these no man should take up arms, but with a view to defend his country and its laws; he puts not off the citizen when he enters the camp, but it is because he *is* a citizen, and would wish to continue so, that he makes himself 'for a while' a soldier; the laws, therefore, and the constitution of these kingdoms, know no such state as that of a perpetual standing soldier, bred up to no other profession than that of war."

I am sure what Blackstone says, holds good with the despotic monarchies of Europe in the present day,—and it is equally true,

that while modern exigency has required the constant employment of the regular soldier, we have too much forgotten the principles of our ancient constitution, in carrying out the details of our Military System: the lamentable effect of this has been to make the Army looked upon as an "excrescence."

I will briefly recapitulate what I have endeavoured to show in the foregoing pages—namely, that it was the "sapientes, fideles, et animosi" (which I suppose may be construed, "the wise, the loyal, and the men of 'pluck'") among our Saxon forefathers, who, by the vote of the people themselves, were appointed to the chief command, while the prudent regulations of Alfred made *all* subjected to his authority, *soldiers:*—that afterwards by the feudal law, the people were *ignored;* as the tenure of military obedience to the sovereign, for the land which each knight possessed gave him a soldiery without expense, and independent of the people. This system was not favourable to liberty, and therefore, when the Saxon element again predominated, efforts to arm the people were renewed. The Statute of Winchester (13 Edward I.) obliged every man, according to his degree, to be armed,—13 Car. 11 ch., which, abolishing Norman Military SERVICE, returned to the Saxon principles of Military DUTY.

A military organisation based on principles foreign to that is opposed to our Constitution—is an "*Excrescence.*"

The statesman's duty is to adapt the various wants of the country, in our own day, to the principles of our ancient constitution. Where we have vast colonies to protect, important garrisons to maintain at home and abroad, it is of course far different to having only the sea-girt shores of a small island to defend from invasion (which we have to do as well). The question, therefore, is, How can all this be done, and yet leave the army identified with the English nation? The Major-General says, what I ventured to assert at the "United Service Institution;"—

I. Do away with the wretched system of recruiting—"pandering to the worst passions of the worst men."

II. Have the *Ballot* for the Militia (or rather cease its annual suspension by Parliament); while you keep up the *efficiency* of the Militia, by liberal provisions, by wise regula-

tions as to training, &c. &c., you keep up its full complement by means of the Ballot. With regard to the Ballot, an outcry may be made, where its necessity is not acknowledged, (but those who know how deficient we were in numbers, all the time we were embodied, after Lord Panmure's order allowed so many to return home, must be convinced of its necessity in a long embodiment, and its expediency even for annual trainings.) AND ENGLISHMEN MUST BEAR THIS IN MIND: *To hold our position in the European scale, we must be ever prepared, in a military point of view, to support that position.* The Militia, if efficient, would supply us with sufficient recruits to fill up the gaps that might occur from year to year in the Line: for it is a fact that cannot be contested, that the military spirit "grows by what it feeds on." We know the great indisposition there is to enter even into the Militia by the humbler youth in England, and though there would always be some volunteers to the National Force, there would never be near enough to fill the gaps made by frequent recruiting. Our Constitution, handed down from our free Saxon ancestors, claims a right over *all* the subjects of the State, as soldiers for its defence; and though our vast population, and the multiform requirements of civilised life, oblige the State to be satisfied with a selection of that "all," how otherwise to make the selection, than "*by lot*"? But then we come, in course of time, to the judicious regulations suggested in the the Major-General's pamphlet, with regard to the education and treatment of the soldier, with a period of shorter service (as of necessity), in the regular troops of the Crown—those thousand offices that are in its gift, bestowed, not on "old" soldiers (I mean soldiers worn out by too long a confinement to the depressing influence of a foreign clime, or incapacitated by too long an acquaintance with nought but military duties—these ought to be otherwise provided for by the State); not, I say, on worn-out soldiers, but on young men in the prime of life, who may, notwithstanding, have served their eight or ten years in the army, and commenced their career at the age of eighteen in the Militia. Such regulations as these are the only practicable means, now-a-days, of mixing the regular soldier with the people; and by carrying out such a system as this, the army would be retained in a high state of discipline, while

the soldiery were still imbued with the popular spirit. God grant that a statesman may rise, willing and able to effect reforms such as these; and if they should be carried out, he will not have worked in vain for the good of his country! The occupations and interests of home would then not be lost sight of by the soldier;—quite a different spirit would be engendered among the commonalty of England with regard to the profession of arms; and almost the only opening to the service being through the ranks of the Militia, it would of course give a great increase of recruits of the better sort to the Militia itself, and (it might be) *in course of time*—by the birth of a nobler spirit more generally acted on—do away with the Ballot altogether: but before anything like such a result could be arrived at, I presume, as a matter of course, the present cruel system of "stoppages," on a man entering the Militia, and all such obsolete customs, would have vanished.

The country is indebted to Major-General Windham, for bringing before the notice of the public these opinions of his: his military reputation must give them additional weight, and he will be respected the more for thus showing his independence of "red tape" and "pipe-clay:" but he goes on to draw conclusions most erroneous, and that can only be justified by his not understanding, like many other military men, that part of his subject. The Minister who would propose in the House of Commons such a scheme as he suggests would deserve impeachment; before adverting to it, however, let me say, that for a Militia regiment to be embodied (as the Major-General would have it) "one half for fourteen or twenty-one days," would be a great mistake: it would have, I conceive, all the evil effects of taking men from their work, and it would not be long enough for an efficient training. Take out the Sundays and the rainy days, and twenty-eight days are too short a time for such efficiency as is requisite; what, therefore, must be fourteen or twenty-one days? But if that be too short, so are ninety days too long: neither officers nor men could spare that time *every year*, remembering, with the former, the important civil duties they have to perform, and, with the latter, their again finding the occupations they had left;—but (leaving these minor points) what I *especially* think so impossible to carry out,—what would in fact

be so unconstitutional,—is this, viz.: that the Militia, on a sudden emergency, should be called on, *should be compelled*, to join the regular army "in a body, whenever the Crown might think their services required."

THE BALLOT FOR THE MILITIA WOULD THEN INDEED BECOME A CONSCRIPTION FOR THE ARMY. Does the gallant General mean that, remembering the peculiar organisation of the Militia, the theory of its formation, and the several Acts of Parliament which regulate the period of service, &c. &c., of those who serve in it, it yet is to be kept a "perpetual reserve," subject to the discretion of a Minister of War, *when* it is to take the field: a standing reserve to that force which only exists by the authority of Parliament from year to year? This plan is on a par with those we heard every day from the Crimean officers, across the mess-table at Colchester; they saw fine bodies of men well up to their duty in the camp; they had their Crimean experiences (alas! too bitter); and each had his scheme how these fine bodies of men should be permanently devoted to the service of their country. One morning, however, came the order for the disembodiment of the Militia, which was the best reply to their speculations. That order conveyed this meaning: —"These regiments were called out for the defence of our shores, while you were gaining the laurels that you so hardly, but so justly earned abroad: it is true they have acquired a considerable degree of discipline, and they perform well the duties of soldiers; in the exigency of the moment, they have submitted to an entire desertion of the duties of private citizens; *all*, if the exigency continue, are well disposed to *continue* those duties they have assumed: many, indeed, enamoured of a military life, have adopted it as a profession; but those who have not thought fit to do so, you have no right to saddle with military duties *a day* beyond the time the country, for its safety, requires it." "Give us" (say the militia soldiers), "the opportunity to maintain our efficiency, by being well trained once a year; and if it be in a camp like this, with an experienced General to command it, so much the better; but because we perform our duties well, do not fix upon us those we never bargained for. We may be made available incidentally to recruit the regular army: it is a great misfortune that the immense use we may

thus be of, is not better understood. The "emergency" for which we are required, both the traditions of our forefathers and the voice of Parliament have clearly defined: we are content to meet that emergency; but we entirely repudiate the power of the Crown to claim more than that at our hands, and we deny the wisdom of our being made (if such a power did exist) a standing reserve to join the regular army on *any* sudden emergency."

No; it appears to me that if the ranks of the Militia are kept full, by means of the Ballot, (a Ballot, I mean, that cannot be twisted into a conscription, and it is because I feel the necessity of the Ballot, that I feel also so strongly how essential it is that the Militia should be confined to its proper duties); if, with the subaltern officers in the Line regiments, a preference were given to those who come from the Militia (that is, if they can pass the proper examination, *not without*); if (subject to the same test), at the termination of each annual training, a commission in a Line regiment should be given by Government for each seventy-five men; if marks of royal favour were occasionally bestowed on those commanding officers who were more particularly successful in giving recruits to the Line, and, as a necessity of course to this end, if the Regiments were called up for training yearly twenty-eight days, *at least* (though six weeks would be better); if the property and professional qualification were strictly adhered to with the Captains of Companies and Field Officers, the professional qualification not to extend too far, so as to swamp the property one (the Militia cannot be safely looked on as a profession though it may be an excellent stepping-stone to a young officer); if to the permanent staff were added one Captain and two Lieutenants, and if every recruit, when he first joins, were compelled to remain three or four months at the dépôt of his Regiment, and every young officer also, till he had acquired some knowledge of his drill;—I am inclined to think that, with such arrangements as these, and others I cannot here refer to, a sufficiently high standard of discipline would be acquired, and that the Militia, by the constant stream of recruits which would flow from its ranks to the regiments of the Line would indeed form an army of reserve, without that compulsory service which I think would be obnoxious to the English people. Though *it is a question* of finance on which one would hardly dare to give

an opinion, there is no doubt that a small daily payment, say one penny a day to each militia soldier, would not be thrown away by the country; receiving it, as he would do perhaps, monthly, it would be a mark of distinction that the English rustic would be proud of, as distinguishing him among his fellows, and it would induce others to put themselves in a position to acquire the same privilege. A great deal, too, might be done by the State, in different ways, to turn the minds of the youth of England to a fondness for military life and military exercises, which is now quite omitted. The Committee of the Privy Council of Education might, through their Inspectors of Schools, keep this somewhat in view. Why should not a good drill-sergeant in the pay of the Council be attached to every district, and some little instruction in military history be afforded in the schools themselves? In that way the village lads would become familiarised with military subjects, and not quite strange to military duty: it is the absence of practical utility to the real business of life, in the present system of rural education, that makes it so incomplete. "Hæc ipsa miserrima vidi." Let our youth learn to become good militia-men, which will certainly not make them essentially worse ploughmen or servants; and if the rewards of the civil service are opened to the educated and well-conducted soldier, as General Windham so wisely suggests, those who have chosen the soldier's career as their occupation, may find thereby their prospects in life secured.

Every arm of the State ought to lend its aid to make the ranks of the Army easily filled with a continued stream of good recruits, and nothing is a trifle that tends to that end. The country is now awake to the necessity of some regular system — an improvement on the past. I say, therefore, let us "hold our own," and not servilely copy other nations whose constitutional theory differs from ours: on the other hand, let us discard all prejudice; thus, steering a middle course, we may hope to arrive at a true and safe result.

W. H.

April, 1857.

THE END.

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